

GLOSSARY OF MCPS OPERATING BUDGET TERMS

Agency—One of the major organizational components of government in Montgomery County, such as Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS); Montgomery County Government (executive departments, legislative offices and boards, the Circuit Court and judicial offices); Montgomery College (MC); Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC); Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC); Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC); and Montgomery County Revenue Authority.

Allocation—The process by which staffing and other resources are given to schools on the basis of factors such as enrollment, the types of programs to be implemented, and other school-specific needs.

Appropriation—Authority to spend money within a specified dollar limit for an approved work program during a fiscal year (FY). Unless explicitly renewed, appropriation authorizations expire at the end of the fiscal year.

Authorized Position—A position that has been approved for hiring in the approved budget or subsequently revised budget.

Bridge to Excellence Act (BTE)—Law requiring Maryland school districts to develop comprehensive five-year master plans that describe their plans for improving the achievement of all students. The BTE law is also known as the Thornton Act.

Budget Staffing Guidelines—Guidance approved by the Board of Education (BOE) that is used to budget and allocate personnel positions in regular and special education; for example, counselors are allocated to middle schools on the basis of projected enrollment.

Capital Improvements Program (CIP)—The comprehensive presentation of capital project expenditure estimates; funding requirements; capital budget requests; and program data for the construction and modernization of all schools and for other capital projects that address facility issues. The CIP, which covers a six-year period, is both a fiscal plan for proposed project expenditures as well as an annual capital budget for appropriations to fund project activity during the first fiscal year of the plan. The CIP is updated every two years.

Category—(Also known as State Category)—State law requires all county school districts to appropriate and record expenditures for education in accordance with standardized state budget categories. These categories are generally based on broad functional classifications, such as administration, instructional costs, special education, and student transportation. Current categories have been in use since FY 1998.

Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR)—The official compilation of all administrative regulations issued by agencies of the state of Maryland.

Common Core State Standards (CCSS)—The Common Core State Standards Initiative is a state-led effort coordinated by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). Developed in collaboration with teachers, school administrators, and experts, the CCSS provide a clear and consistent framework to prepare students for college and the workforce.

Compensation—Payment made to employees in return for services performed. Total compensation includes salaries, wages, employee benefits (Social Security, employer-paid insurance premiums, disability coverage, and retirement contributions), and other forms of remuneration that have a stated value.

Consumer Price Index—Urban (CPI-U)—A commonly accepted indicator of inflation as it applies to consumer goods, including the supplies, materials, and services required by MCPS. That rate of inflation is computed using the average of the indices in one fiscal year compared to the average of the indices in the prior fiscal year. For budget purposes, inflation is measured on a fiscal year (FY) basis using the CPI-U for the Washington-Baltimore Metropolitan area. For purposes of Charter limitation of property tax, the November to November CPI-U of the preceding year is used.

Continuing Salary Costs—The incremental salary cost associated with the movement of current MCPS employees along the applicable salary schedule, including changes for longevity (years of service).

Continuous Improvement—An ongoing MCPS effort aimed at improving the organizational culture by improving teaching and management processes and creating ownership and shared responsibility among all employees and stakeholders.

Cost Per Student—A figure that is calculated using the total operating budget amount (excluding summer school, community services, tuition for students with disabilities in private placement, and revolving management accounts) divided by the number of students in Grades K–12.

Curriculum 2.0—MCPS elementary curriculum built around developing students' critical- and creative-thinking skills, as well as essential academic-success skills, so that students are well prepared for a lifetime of learning. Designed for the elementary grades, Curriculum 2.0 engages students and teachers more and allows more time for the arts, information literacy, science, social studies, physical education, and other subjects.

Depreciation—The expiration of the useful life of a fixed asset over a determined period of time attributable to wear and tear, deterioration, action of the physical elements, inadequacy, and obsolescence. Also, the portion of the cost of a fixed asset charged as an expense during a particular period.

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Employee Benefits—For budgeting purposes, payments made by MCPS for the employer portion of Social Security taxes, retirement contributions, group health insurance, and life insurance.

Enrollment—The number of students in Grades K–12 attending MCPS. The official enrollment count is based upon the number of students recorded on September 30 of each year.

Enterprise Fund—A fund used to record the fiscal transactions of MCPS activities that are financed and operated in a manner similar to private enterprise, with the intent that the costs of providing goods and services, including financing, are wholly recovered through charges to consumers, users, or other non-tax revenue.

Expenditure—A decrease in the net financial resources of MCPS generally due to the purchase of goods and services or the payment of salaries and benefits.

Expenditure Restrictions—A limitation placed on spending budgeted funds that may occur in any given year as a result of a difficult fiscal climate. The specific restrictions and a process for implementation are specified in a memorandum from the chief operating officer. The restrictions may include a freeze on filling vacant positions and other expenditures.

Financial Management System (FMS)—An integrated web-enabled solution for tracking and managing MCPS financial business functions within one centralized system. FMS automates many previously paper-based processes and supports efficient operation of schools and offices through improved access to information consistent with the MCPS strategic plan.

Fiscal Year (FY)—The 12-month period to which the annual operating and capital budgets and their appropriations apply. The fiscal year for MCPS starts on July 1 and ends on June 30. The number of the fiscal year refers to the year in which the fiscal year ends; for example, Fiscal Year 2017 begins on July 1, 2016 and ends on June 30, 2017.

Fixed Charges—Charges of a generally recurrent nature that are not allocable to individual expenditure categories. Included are contributions to employee retirement and insurance, social security, interest on current loans, fidelity and personal liability insurance, and personnel tuition reimbursements.

Free and Reduced-Price Meals (FARMS) System—Students may qualify for FARMS services on the basis of their family's income or receipt of Food Supplement Program or Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) benefits.

Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)—A way of describing a position according to the percentage of time the employee is authorized to work. In this system, a full-time permanent employee is a 1.0 FTE. The positions of employees who are authorized to work less than full-time are expressed as fractions of 1.0 FTE; for example, a .5 FTE is authorized to work for 20 hours per week in a job that full-time employees perform for 40 hours per week.

Fund—A sum of money or other resources that are used for a specific objective. MCPS uses the following funds—general, capital projects, supported projects, food services, instructional TV, real estate management, field trip, entrepreneurial, and warehouse.

General Wage Adjustment (GWA)—A change in wages made according to a formula that reflects changes in the cost of living.

Grade—An assigned level on a salary schedule that denotes the level of skills, education, and responsibility of a position.

Grant—Funding or resources given by an outside entity to achieve a specific objective or public purpose. MCPS receives grants from government programs, corporate charities, and private philanthropic organizations. Grants are awarded for well-defined purposes and must be spent only for those purposes. MCPS accounts for grant expenditures through supported projects.

High School Assessments (HSA)—Tests used to determine a Maryland public school student's mastery of Maryland Content Standards in algebra, English, government, and biology.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)—A federal law regulating how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to children with disabilities. The law mandates a free and appropriate education for students with disabilities in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) that meets the student's needs.

Interagency Coordinating Board for Community Use of Public Facilities (ICB/CUPF)—The office within Montgomery County Government whose mission is to maximize the community's use of schools and other public facilities and to identify and facilitate activities and programs that respond to the community's needs without disrupting the instructional program of MCPS.

Lapse—The amount of unused budgeted salary that remains when an employee terminates service and is not immediately replaced.

Lease-Purchase Agreement—A contractual agreement that is a financing mechanism with payments made over time. The mechanism is typically used to acquire equipment.

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Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)—An educational setting that complies with the mandate of the IDEA to the maximum extent appropriate. Students with disabilities are educated with students who do not have disabilities and only removed from general education classrooms when the nature of their disability prevents their learning with the use of supplementary aids and services.

Level of Service—The existing or current services, programs, and facilities provided by MCPS to students. The level of service may increase, decrease, or remain the same depending upon needs, alternatives, and available resources.

Maintenance of Effort (MOE)—A Maryland state law that requires local governments to provide a definite level of local effort to fund public education from year to year. Local funding is to remain at least the same on a per-student basis. The law ensures that additional state aid will not supplant local revenues.

Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence (Baldrige)—A systematic process for understanding and improving school performance. The Baldrige criteria, comprising 11 Core Values/Best Practices and seven categories, provide a dynamic framework for continuous improvement.

Maryland State Assessment (MSA)—MSA was a criterion-referenced assessment that described how well students in Grades 3–8 and 10 had mastered reading and mathematics content specified in the Maryland Content Standards. The MSA was developed to meet the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2001. In FY 2015, Maryland school districts replaced the MSA assessments by those developed by the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers.

Master Plan—A MCPS multiyear plan that describes the goals, objectives, and strategies that will be used to improve student achievement and meet state and local performance standards for all students. The master plan also describes specifically how to improve student achievement for students in special education, with limited English proficiency, in prekindergarten and kindergarten, gifted and talented, and in career and technology courses. The master plan includes the MCPS strategic plan. By law, the master plan must be submitted to the state of Maryland every five years.

Maximum Class Size Guidelines—Guidelines that represent the standard to which MCPS strives in placing the number of children in one classroom.

MCAAP—The Montgomery County Association of Administrators and Principals (MCAAP) is the bargaining unit that represents principal trainees, administrative interns, and all administrative and supervisory positions on the M to Q salary schedule, including 11-month assistant school administrators.

MCBOA—The Montgomery County Business and Operations Administrators (MCBOA), represented by MCAAP, includes all noncertified supervisory employees who provide direction to other employees, exercise independent judgment, are responsible for the evaluation of at least two other employees, and do not report to members of the SEIU bargaining unit, except those excluded by the Board of Education as confidential employees and those who are represented by MCAAP.

MCEA—Montgomery County Education Association (MCEA), the employee organization representing teachers and other professional staff.

Mission—A statement that describes an organizational unit's purpose, reason for existing, and relationship to the MCPS strategic plan.

Negotiated Agreement—A legal contract between the BOE and a certified representative of a recognized bargaining unit for specific terms and conditions of employment, e.g., hours, working conditions, salaries, or employee benefits.

Non-budgeted grants—Grants that MCPS receives for designated purposes that are not expected to be funded on an ongoing basis or at predictable levels. In many cases, MCPS must compete with other school districts and entities for these grants.

Non-Recommended Reductions—A list of expenditure reductions that address the difference between the County Council's recommended affordability allocation and the BOE's requested amount. The options cannot be recommended because the Board believes the cuts would harm the schools.

Object of Expenditure—A numeric indicator that identifies the form of an expenditure, such as salaries (01), contractual (02), supplies and materials (03), other (04), and equipment (05).

Operating Budget—A comprehensive plan by which the MCPS operating programs are funded for a single fiscal year. The operating budget includes descriptions of programs, appropriation authority, details of estimated expenditures and revenue sources, and personnel, as well as related program data information on the fiscal management of the school system.

Operating Budget Guide—A guide that is developed and published annually to explain the budgetary process for the upcoming budget development cycle and to promote a clear understanding of budget preparation and submission requirements.

Operating Budget Orientation—Meetings held by the Department of Management, Budget, and Planning to review the Operating Budget Guide and provide clarification to MCPS units regarding budget preparation.

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Other Salaries—Remuneration for temporary work performed on other than full-time bases. Other salaries include payments to substitute teachers, stipends, extracurricular activities, summer teaching, and support during peak or seasonal periods.

Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)—A consortium of 24 states, including Maryland, that developed a common set of K–12 assessments in English and mathematics, as well as literacy in other content areas, that will determine whether a student is college- and career-ready. Full implementation of the PARCC assessments began in FY 2015.

Per Student Allocations—The amount of funds budgeted for textbooks, instructional supplies, media center materials, and other school-based expenses divided by the number of students in schools.

Performance Measurement—The description of how key objectives will be measured to attain the goals of the MCPS strategic plan.

Personnel Complement—A chart published in the budget that displays budgeted positions by unit. The chart provides position titles, total number of FTEs, grade, and whether the position works year round or is school-calendar based.

Personnel Costs—Expenditures for salaries, wages, and benefits payable to MCPS employees.

Positions—Identified permanent jobs into which persons may be hired on either a full-time or part-time basis.

Program—A primary service, function, or set of activities that addresses a specific responsibility or goal within a mission. A program encompasses all associated activities directed toward the attainment of established objectives. A program will have measurable outcomes and clearly defined attainable objectives that may be short-term or long-term in nature.

Program Budget—A published document that displays the allocation of budgeted expenditures by specific MCPS programs. The Program Budget is published twice annually and corresponds to the publication of the Superintendent's Recommended Operating Budget and the Operating Budget Summary.

Ratio Positions—Positions established by applying each school's student enrollment to Board-approved staffing standards.

Realignment—The process by which resources are moved from one part of the budget to another part to meet managerial and operational needs with no net change in the total budget.

Reorganization—A change in the organizational structure within or between MCPS units.

Resource Page—Charts published in the operating budget document that display the budget for a unit or group of units.

Revenue—All funds MCPS receives annually for the Operating Budget from federal, state, and county sources, enterprise funds, fees, and other sources.

Salaries and Wages—An object of expenditure for monetary compensation to employees in the form of annual or hourly rates of pay.

Salary Schedule—A listing of minimum and maximum salaries for each grade level in a classification plan for authorized positions.

SEIU—Service Employees International Union (SEIU), the employee organization that represents supporting services employees.

Special Education Staffing Plan—An annual plan required by the state of Maryland for each local district that describes the needs of special education students and how these needs will be met.

Spending Affordability Guideline (SAG)—An approach to budgeting that assigns expenditure ceilings for the forthcoming budget year on the basis of expected revenues and other factors. Under the County Charter (Section 305), the County Council is required to establish spending affordability guidelines for both the capital and operating budgets.

Staffing Ratios—Per-student standards used to budget for teachers, administrators, and other instructional and support staff at schools.

State Categories—State law requires all county school districts to appropriate and record expenditures for education in accordance with standardized state budget categories. These categories are generally based on broad functional classifications such as administration, instructional costs, special education, and student transportation. Current categories have been in use since 1998.

Step—A salary increment awarded annually to an employee for satisfactory performance until the employee reaches the top pay step of the pay grade to which the position is assigned.

Strategic Plan—A plan adopted by the Board of Education that focuses on the major academic priorities of the school system. It includes major goals, objectives, performance measures, and instructional strategies. The Operating Budget is aligned with the strategic plan.

Strategy—The principal ways in which MCPS staff direct their efforts in pursuit of the school system's and unit's mission and goals. Strategies are clear and uncomplicated methods for attaining goals and key results.

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Supplemental Appropriation—An appropriation of funds above amounts originally designated, to authorize expenditures not anticipated in the adopted budget. A supplemental appropriation is required to enable expenditure of reserves or additional revenues received by MCPS through grants or other sources.

Tax Supported—A program supported in whole or part by tax revenues and included in spending affordability guidelines.

Turnover—The accumulation of unused budgeted funds that results from replacing former employees by lower-paid staff.

Zero-based Budgeting—A method of budgeting in which all line items are presumed to have \$0 funds and any amount budgeted for them is based on justified need. This method is in contrast to incremental budgeting that either adds or subtracts amounts or increments from the amount budgeted in the current year.

